



The PLS GAZETTE

P.O. Box 26202
Collegeville, PA 19426-0202

FIRST CLASS



The PLS GAZETTE

March–April 2014

A newsletter of the Pennsylvania Live Steamers, Inc.

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Green Signals Ahead

In the January – February issue of the PLS Gazette I wished everyone a Happy New Year – 2014 with a wish for no more snow! We are now in April and for PLS it is the beginning of a new Fiscal Year. In March we had our first membership meeting and the election of Offices and three open positions for the Board of Directors (see election results elsewhere in this Gazette). April is also the first month of starting up the railroad and running trains again — here is hoping we don't have a late April snow storm.

In the last Gazette I noted that it felt like winter would never end and although we have had a few days of milder weather in the first few days of April, the daytime temperatures have been below normal and the wind and rain has slowed early spring work on a number of PLS projects. You can find pictures and project updates in this issue of the Gazette on page 6. One project that has not been completed as of this writing is the Building 3 transfer table. In early January we started repair and maintenance, the extent of the work ended up being greater than expected, but considering the table was placed into service nearly 24 years ago, we can not complain as it has been a workhorse for many years with very few problems. For those not familiar with the transfer table's operation it is an elevator table that is moved manually on two tracks between the open path between the facing engine bays of Building 3. Pushing the table by hand

to the north end of its rails just past Building 3 allows the table (elevator) to be raised and lowered allowing access to engines and train cars brought into the north end unloading area. The table covered with track can be raised and lowered to accept equipment from trailers, or trucks that needs unloading or loading. Once the equipment is rolled on to the transfer table a short folding ramp is folded up and the entire transfer can be moved to the three levels of both East and West engine storage bays, the steaming bays on the south side of Building 3 or to track level for movement to the rail yard and/or the mainline tracks, both 4 ¾ gauge (1" scale) and 7 ¼ gauge (1.5 or

1.6" scale) tracks. The table (elevator) is moved up and down with an electric motor through a reduction gear box driving a network of roller chains (looks like large bicycle chain). There is more than 100 feet of chain moving over 18 sprockets that are used to move the table up and down. We have replaced all 18 sprockets, machined and installed new sprocket bushings and sprocket shafts that now have lubrication access. All the roller chain was also replaced as well as a new belt drive from the motor to the gear box. I would like to thank Jim Salmons for the hours of machine work he completed on a number of the sprockets

(Continued on page 2)



Ron Shupard

It may have been cold here but it was comfortable in Florida. Dave Johnson, Bruce Saylor and Pat Murphy take a break on the Buckingham Central.



Lee Nonnemacher

Work is almost complete on the extension to the passenger station. More project information on page 6.

Green Signals Ahead

(Continued from page 1)

that needed to be customized for our application. Also for the work on replacing bushings and machining new keyways in the main drive shaft assembly. I would also like to thank others who worked in the cold and the wind to disassemble/reassemble the table drive, machine components, clean parts, manually lift the table, purchase parts and tote and handle and clean greasy parts of the transfer system. A few of those who worked with Jim Salmons, Bob Hillenbrand and me are: Walter Mensch, Bob Morris, George Cooper, Bruce Saylor, Paul Quirk, Pat Murphy and Henry Blanco White. I am sure I missed others that also lent a hand in moving this project along through out the long winter months and to all I say thank you. It looks like the transfer table work will be completed by the time you read this Gazette, I have my fingers crossed.

As noted above the election of Officers was held in March. On behalf of the Officers, Board of Directors and the PLS Membership I would like to offer a special thank you to our outgoing Secretary Robert M. Blackson. Bob's knowledge, attention to detail and meticulous minutes of both Board Meetings and Membership meetings has been impeccable. That, along with his command of Robert's Rules of Order is not only outstanding, but has been greatly appreciated, especially by me. Thank you Bob!

I look forward to seeing all of you on the PLS mainline this season.

Frank Webb - President

2014 PLS Calendar of Events

Saturday, April 19	Board of Directors Meeting - 9:30 AM Membership Meeting - 12:30 PM Spring Clean Up Afternoon/Evening Run
Saturday, April 27	Run Day - Members & Guests Boiler Testing
Sunday, May 4	Run Day Rain Date
Saturday, May 17	Board of Directors Meeting - 9:30 AM Membership Meeting - 12:30 PM
Friday, May 23	Spring Meet – Members & Guests
Saturday, May 24	Spring Meet – Members & Guests
Sunday, May 25	Spring Meet – Members & Guests

Donation Acknowledgements

PLS wishes to thank the following members for donations received during February and March: Don Maleta, Terry Weinstein, Mary E. Spear, Barry Shapin, James Stapleton, Jerry Shank Sr and John Bortz.

Club Membership News

PLS welcomes new Associate members Karen Delany, Ronald Vertrees, and Paul C. Michener.

Storage Track Payments are Due

To regular members who have storage tracks at PLS: your annual fees were due as of April 1. If you haven't already paid, please see Walt Mensch with your payment or send it to PLS c/o the Treasurer.

Membership Gauge

As of March 31, PLS has:

- 101 Regular Members
- 215 Associate Members
- 9 Honorary Members

Pennsylvania Live Steamers, Inc.

President	Frank Webb	77 Roundwood Circle, Collegeville, PA 19426	president@palivesteamers.org
Secretary	C. Robert Morris	3034 Black Swift Rd., Norristown, PA 19403	rmorris1171@verizon.net
Treasurer	Walter Mensch	1348 Sheep Hill Rd., Pottstown, PA 19465	
Gazette Editor	Allen Underkofler	Box 609, Kimberton, PA 19442-0609	pls@apunderkofler.com

Board of Directors: Sharon Connelly, connellywood@verizon.net; Ron Henderson, ronjhenderson@verizon.net; Steve Leatherman, steveleatherman@gmail.com; Jim Salmons, jshay6@verizon.net; Bruce Saylor, bgsberk@comcast.net; Ron Shupard, ShuSmoke@aol.com.

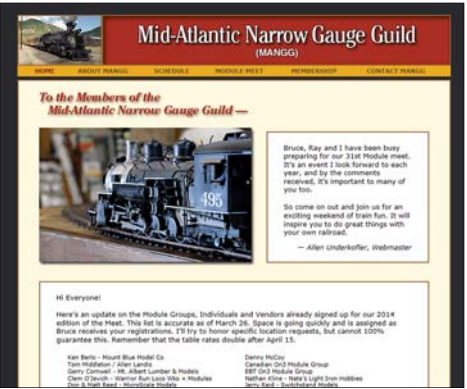
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On the Internet ...

Mid-Atlantic Narrow Gauge

The Mid-Atlantic Narrow Gauge Meet will be held in the annex of the Kimberton Fire Company in Kimberton, Pennsylvania, May 16-18. This is our 31st meet. We have modules from Nn3 – Fn3 We also have tables available with items for sale in all scales. It is a private show and is *not* open to the public. But we are open to all narrow gauge modelers. Saturday is the big day. Check out the website at www.midatlanticng.org for information.

— Bruce Saylor



PLS on Facebook

PLS Regular Member Pete Brown maintains a Facebook page with current interesting items about PLS, other live steam clubs, and railroading in general. If you would like to visit this page and aren't a Facebook member you can go directly to the page without having to log in to Facebook. To do so, simply type www.facebook.com/palivesteamers into the address line of your web browser. Once on the page, you can save it to your favorites for future access.



Back In The Day

I was recently involved in a discussion concerning the valve gear of a once very popular gauge 0 model steam locomotive, the Bassett-Lowke Mogul. It has piston valves and reverses by changing over the inlet and exhaust ports. One person taking part in the discussion said the design was so poor there was no theoretically correct setting for it. I totally agreed but added that even if there were, the truly correct setting would always be that which gave the best practical result, which was not necessarily the same thing. This statement was the result of hard won experience.

For a good number of years I worked first on large high pressure boilers and later on steam turbines as an erector and start up engineer in places that were often quite remote from the factory. Communication with the factory was often difficult either due to time difference and/or the telephone system. International calls had to be booked and might take five

or six hours to come through. Sometimes we had a fax machine, but it was a far cry from today's technology, took many minutes to scan a page and was suitable only for letter sized paper. Most of the time we felt blessed by this isolation and I feel sorry for engineers today doing similar work who can be pestered by the factory personnel any hour of the day or night.

Out in the field our job was to get the equipment working to the best of its capability and sometimes this meant ignoring the factory's instructions. We did not of course make fundamental changes in the design, but such things as bearing clearances, alignment, start up procedures, governor settings etc. we considered ourselves free to modify, regarding the factory specifications as a useful starting point. This is how it should be, the equipment is there to perform and by the nature of its size and complexity it could not be realistically tested in the factory, but the engineers there did not usually see it that way. As long as the customer was happy we figured what the factory engineers were not aware of

wouldn't hurt them. At the end of the job the factory would be informed of 'as built' deviations from the drawings, but this information rarely made it on to the next contract's drawings and consequently was circulated among field personnel by their own bush telegraph.

So when about forty years ago retired steam locomotives started to be brought back into running by enthusiast groups it was not surprising they were plagued with problems, particularly with bearing overheating. Factory drawings were being scrupulously adhered to and that was often the problem, for the men whose job it had been to keep the locos running in their day had known about such things as specified bearing clearances being a bit too tight, or insufficient side clearance being given and so done some judicious scraping. To the adage, "If it ain't broke don't fix it" may be added, "The setting which works best is the right one."

— Murray Wilson

Projects Update

Station Roof Extension

Although the horrible outdoor conditions in the past couple of months had halted work on the station roof extension, recent weather has allowed some work to be performed. As seen in the photo, shingling has been completed on the south side, and as of this writing, the north side is almost complete. Finishing touches will be the addition of a ridge cap and a finial for the end. There will also be a fair amount of painting to be done under the roof.

— Lee Nonnemacher



Steve Leatherman and Bob Morris on the scaffolding applying the roofing while Bruce Saylor and Guy Godschall watch.

1" Car Barn

The 1" car barn now has all of its approach tracks in place. Check out those three-way switches.



Multi-Gauge Bridge

Ron Shupard and Bruce Saylor set the gauge on new track on the multi-gauge bridge spanning the main line. The bridge should be serviceable by the opening of the running season.



All photos Ron Shupard

Election Results

Elections were held at the regular membership meeting on March 15, 2014. Frank Webb, Bob Morris and Walt Mensch, running unopposed, were confirmed as president, secretary, and treasurer, respectively. Bob Morris, although he has not held office for a while, was previously PLS treasurer, an office he held for over ten years.

There were six names on the ballot for the board of directors, for which three were to be elected. Those elected were Steve Leatherman, Jim Salmons and Ron Shupard. Rounding out the board with one year remaining on their two-year terms are Sharon Connelly, Ron Henderson and Bruce Saylor. For Steve Leatherman, this will be his first time to hold an elected office at PLS.

Congratulations and best wishes to those elected. 🍷



Allen Underkofler



Lee Nonnemacher



Allen Underkofler

Above Left: President Frank Webb;
Above: New Secretary Bob Morris;
Left: Treasurer Walt Mensch.

Below L-R: New Directors Steve Leatherman, Jim Salmons, Ron Shupard.



Lee Nonnemacher



Allen Underkofler



Allen Underkofler

2014 Spring Meet Information

The Spring Meet will be held on May 24th and 25th this year. As usual, running may start on Friday afternoon,

May 23th. Volunteers are needed for gate duty, station duty, and kitchen duty. Just sign up for a time slot when you arrive at the meet. And please remember that we depend on your donations of baked goods for Friday, Saturday, and Sunday.

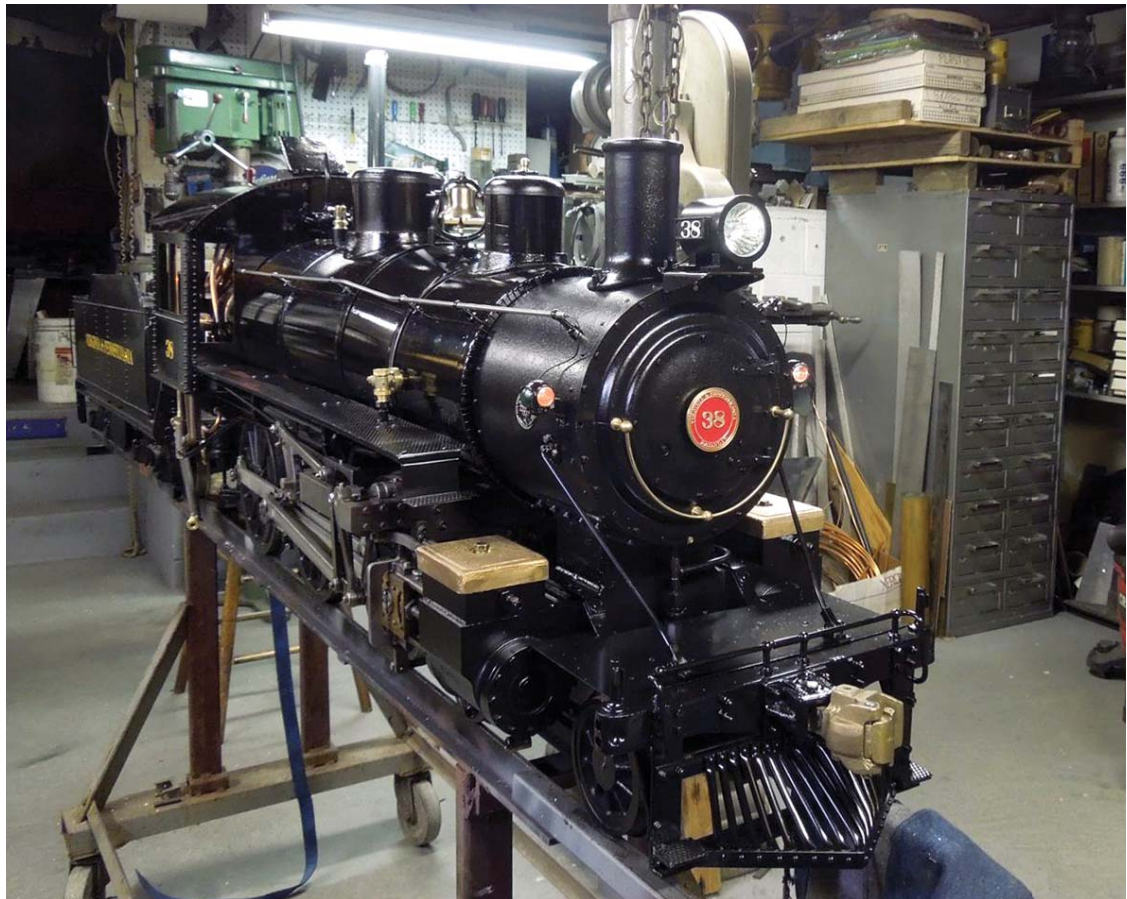
Please note: during the meet, the

clubhouse refrigerators are used for food and drinks sold by PLS throughout the weekend. Should you need refrigeration for either personal use or items brought for the pot luck dinner, please use your own cooler if at all possible. Thank you.

Safely Moving an Engine by Yourself

a photo sequence by Bruce Saylor

Moving a heavy engine can be treacherous if not done properly



Finished locomotive in the basement shop ready to be moved.

Moving a several hundred pound locomotive by yourself requires a lot of planning and safety precautions. This loco was moved on a dolly and pulled up a temporary track placed on

the basement stairs using a powered winch. It was moved to a detached garage by truck and placed on rollers for initial testing on Wednesday, March 12, 2014 after working on the new station roof at PLS. The locomotive was

tested on air and runs fine. When the weather warms, I will fire it up to make sure all fittings and connections have no leaks. Next stop is at PLS for a test run it on the club track. 🚂



L-R from Top: Locomotive on temporary track lifted up onto the top step of basement stairs by hand; Looking down the steps at locomotive before winching it up; Temporary track attached to the dolly lift and loco being winched up; Winch attached to my truck hitch powered by a heavy duty battery charger; Loco was loaded into the truck to be transported to the garage; The loco was then transferred to the test dolly.

